

# Zaheer Afzal

Year of Call: 2000

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## Introduction

Zaheer has a strong and established criminal and regulatory practice. He operates predominately on the Midlands circuit but is also regularly instructed on cases in London and on the Northern circuit.

Zaheer has extensive trial advocacy experience. He is regularly instructed in serious and complex cases. He has had numerous successes in cases including offences of:

- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Historic Sexual Offences
- Fraud & POCA
- Regulatory Offences
- Serious Organised Crime

Zaheer is a patient and compassionate Barrister with a reputation for strong advocacy fighting fearlessly on behalf of his clients.

Zaheer provides a highly professional and seamless service for his clients.

Zaheer is committed to creating a strong working relationship with clients seeking to obtain the best outcome for their case. Some of the cases that he has been asked to assist with include:

- R v TNK – Zaheer successfully secured an acquittal in this case following a 12 day trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court. His client was alleged to have been part of a serious episode of violent disorder at 1am in Walsall followed up by a robbery and further unlawful violence in a group towards a young man. Deploying precise and careful advocacy Zaheer was able to demonstrate that although present at the scene his client's behaviour did not play any part in the actual offending under consideration by the jury. Preparation for the case required analysis of complex telephone data and cell site evidence along with CCTV and eye witness accounts of the violence which took place throughout that evening. Zaheer impressed the jury using downloads of maps, plans and aerial photographs of the scene and the route between Walsall and Handsacre. The jury were unanimous in the verdict of not guilty and Zaheer's lay and professional clients were delighted. Rupinder Lallie, Partner at Messrs Lallie and Co was quoted as saying "Zaheer really impressed me with his excellent client care under very stressful circumstances due to his late introduction to the case. His friendly demeanour throughout the case outside of court coupled with razor sharp advocacy while he was in court made the difference in the presentation of the defence in this case." – As a result of being found not guilty Zaheer's client was awarded his defence costs.
- R v J – Zaheer successfully defended J facing trial on a charge of sexual assault upon a University student in the early hours of the morning in Birmingham city centre. J's case was won by Zaheer through firm cross examination of the complainant using analysis of CCTV footage from the area where the alleged attack took place. Zaheer's questioning of the complainant demonstrated that there was a vastly different interpretation of events available to the jury to that which the prosecution had suggested. This resulted in a verdict of not guilty for J.
- R v P – Zaheer was instructed to defend P on multiple historical offences of violence against his spouse. P had language difficulties as he was a native Polish speaker thus requiring an interpreter to assist him for his trial. Zaheer successfully argued

for the case to be stopped at half time following a submission of no case. This resulted in not guilty verdicts on all counts faced by P.

- R v W – Zaheer was instructed to defend W in respect of an allegation of serious football violence. He presented W's case with care, compassion and a diligent analysis of CCTV footage from numerous angles. Zaheer fought tirelessly on W's behalf throughout his trial lasting 5 days. W was extremely grateful to Zaheer for the extensive efforts he made to set W's actions in a favourable light.
- R v F – Zaheer successfully defended F who along with his brother was charged with a number of offences of violence in a trial lasting 5 days. F had previous convictions however he argued that on this occasion he was the victim of bullying by the complainant! Zaheer was able to draw out evidence from the complainant and other prosecution witnesses in cross examination that demonstrated there were serious grounds for doubting the credibility of the account being relied upon by the prosecution. F had a learning disability and the resulting communication issues required a great deal of effort and patience to work out how he answered the charges against him. Ultimately F was very grateful to Zaheer for representing his interests firmly with precise cross examination and a very persuasive closing speech.
- R v M – Zaheer successfully defended M facing charges of historical sexual abuse. The case required an in depth analysis of the framework of a family from the DRC who it was argued were struggling to deal with the pressure of raising children in the UK resulting in the complaint being made many years later. Cross examination of the complainant was carried out with sensitivity, compassion and with due respect and regard to the defendant's religious, family and cultural beliefs. M was very happy with Zaheer's representation and advocacy securing him a not guilty verdict in respect of his case. M was acquitted after a trial lasting 4 days.
- R v M – Zaheer was instructed to defend a lead defendant in Operation Smarten a money laundering matter worth in excess of £140 million. He successfully argued to diminish the significance and seriousness of his client's role. As a result the prosecution conceded that POCA did not apply. The trial lasted 55 days.
- R v F – Zaheer was instructed to defend one of four defendants said to have created a company designed solely to launder money from a large scale County Council price-fixing fraud. Zaheer's advocacy was instrumental in changing the court's perception of his client's role resulting in an extremely favourable POCA judgement much to the advantage of his client. The trial lasted 3 weeks.
- R v C – Zaheer was instructed as part of a defence team with the highly regarded Queen's Counsel Mr. Kevin Hegarty QC to assist a deeply troubled client accused of murdering both of his parents. Through patient and diligent preparation of the defence case the prosecution agreed to drop the murder charges. The court was invited to deal with the case by way of lesser charges of manslaughter through diminished responsibility. Following extensive legal argument about the issue of drug induced psychosis a hospital disposal was secured in the client's behalf.
- R v Z – Zaheer was instructed as part of a defence team with one of Her Majesty's most popular Queen's Counsel Mr. Richard Benson QC to defend a man accused of murder by decapitating his father. The considerable efforts of the defence team helped to change the prosecution's psychiatrist views. As a result the prosecution lost the ensuing trial resulting in the client being found not guilty of murder.
- R v S – Zaheer was instructed to defend a client with severe learning difficulties charged with numerous historical sexual offences. This was an extremely difficult & challenging week long trial requiring patience, compassion & diligence. As a result of focussed and expert questioning of the complainant the jury were persuaded to return a verdict of not guilty on all charges.
- R v A – Zaheer was instructed to represent one of four defendants alleged to have been involved in a large scale inter-familial sexual offending. It was widely acknowledged by all of the defendants that Zaheer's razor sharp cross examination of the third complainant was the turning point in the trial resulting in not guilty verdicts across the board. The trial lasted 3 weeks.
- R v C – Zaheer successfully defended C in a multi-handed grooming case. His client was facing serious sexual offence charges which would have resulted in lengthy sentences in excess of 10 years. As a result of Zaheer's extensive preparation with the client & the deployment of targeted and expert advocacy skills he secured an acquittal on charges of rape and sexual assault on behalf of his client. The trial lasted 8 weeks.
- R v R – Zaheer was instructed to defend this client with the highly esteemed Rachel Brand QC in a multi-handed murder with a number of issues including joint enterprise. The trial was lengthy and complex involving close and careful analysis of CCTV footage from a number of different angles, complex cell site telephone evidence.

# Direct Access

Zaheer is registered to undertake direct access work on behalf of clients.